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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we wait expectantly for You to bring order from our world's chaos. Empower our lawmakers today to contribute harmony to our Nation and world by living with purity. Make their thoughts and desires so pure that they can bear Your scrutiny. Make their words so pure that You delight to hear them. Make their deeds so pure that You find joy in seeing them. And because of their pure thoughts, desires, words, and deeds, may our Senators possess such pure hearts that they will see You.

We pray in Your wonderful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

PROTECT WOMEN'S HEALTH FROM CORPORATE INTERFERENCE ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 459, S. 2578, the Protect Women's Health From Corporate Interference Act.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 459, S. 2578, a bill to ensure that employers cannot

interfere in their employees' birth control and other health care decisions.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, there will be a period of morning business until 12 noon today, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees. The majority will control the first half, the Republicans the final half.

At 12 noon today the Senate will proceed to executive session and to a series of two rollcall votes on the following nominations: cloture on Norman C. Bay to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and cloture on Cheryl A. LaFleur to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Following the second vote, the Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow for our weekly caucus meetings. If cloture is invoked on either of the nominations, the time from 2:15 p.m. until 3 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees. At 3 p.m., the Senate will proceed to vote on confirmation of the two nominations.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2599
AND H.R. 4718

Mr. President, it is my understanding that there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2599) to stop exploitation through trafficking.

A bill (H.R. 4718) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify and make permanent bonus depreciation.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to both of these bills.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bills will be placed on the calendar.

FERC NOMINATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, later today, as I have just mentioned, the Senate will hold two rollcall votes to confirm nominations to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission—Norman Bay and Cheryl LaFleur.

I am aware of the important nature of these two nominations, and I realize that their confirmations have significant consequences.

Upon her confirmation, Cheryl LaFleur will remain at the FERC as chair for 9 months. Following that period of time, Norman Bay will then assume the position of FERC chair.

I appreciate very much the work done by a number of Senators to get us to the point where we are. The chair of the energy committee, Senator MARY LANDRIEU, has done really hard work, and it has been a bipartisan effort to move these nominations forward.

I have been assured by both nominees that the issue which the Wall Street Journal editorialized about yesterday—and they called it “the federal takeover of New York's electric grid”—will be addressed. I have spoken to both nominees, and they will take a hard look at that. When it came out yesterday, I directed attention to that, and that will be addressed by both of them, and they have said so.

HOBBY LOBBY DECISION

Mr. President, last week my friend, the Republican leader, essentially declared victory for American women in their struggle for equality by saying:

We've come a long way in pay equity and there are a ton of women CEO's now running major companies. . . . I could be wrong, but I think most of the barriers [for American women] have been lowered.

The Republican leader seems to be suggesting the obstacles preventing women from receiving equal treatment under the law have been conquered—the struggle for equality for women is over.

• This “buller” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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